

March 12, 1976

SENATOR F. LEWIS: Mr. President, let me clear up a couple...

PRESIDENT: You are closing now Senator on...

SENATOR F. LEWIS: Yes, sir, this is my closing reply. Mr. President, I appreciate the concern of all of the members on this issue. But, let me explain to you just two brief things. First of all in the area of transportation, the way that we had that before we said that we will provide transportation for any of these listed handicaps on page six, regardless of where they went to school. They could live four blocks down the street and want transportation. It was our opinion that the only logical way to handle this is that if you provided transportation for one handicapped child you had to provide it for all of them if they met a criteria. Now listen to the reasonableness of this criteria. We said that we will provide for any handicapped child transportation when either the child is required to attend a facility other than that what would be the normal school of attendance facility of a child. In other words, if he has any of these handicapping conditions if he attends his normal training area, there is no transportation payment. And, however, if the nature of the child's handicapping condition is such that special transportation is required. So, understand what we did, we took it from saying that if a child has these kind of handicaps, regardless of where he goes to school we pay. We said that if a child is handicapped. If he is required to go to other than his normal attendance center, or if he has a handicap of a nature that special transportation is required we pay. An example of the latter would be the J. P. Lord school in Omaha, which is for multiple handicapped children. I have been there. They have the buses with a special lift, roll the children in with their special wheel chairs, take them, let the children out. It is obvious that that child meets both criteria. He has to go other than to his normal facility, and special transportation is required. Now, Senator Dworak, I certainly don't mind the hard look at the bill. I think that Senator Dworak has a misunderstanding about the bill. For instance Senator Dworak mentioned speech therapy. That is a reimbursable cost. It is a reimbursable cost that doesn't deal with transportation and that is why I couldn't follow his logic, because that is a program that anywhere you would be, except in a very small rural school the transportation would be on sight. It would be the attendance area, Senator Cope in Kearney, the elementary attendance center's there. It would be at the elementary attendance center's in Grand Island, Bellevue, Crawford, Aurora, wherever. Now, let's talk about the real issue of the bill. Again, I want to tell you that I am not in an advocacy position at this point when I tell you this. I am telling you that the bill as we have it now can not work. Will not work. Last year, last year because of LB403, and I am gathering those figures so I am not going to speculate, but the local school district budgets increased by hundreds and thousands of dollars. Because we told them that they had to accept a program. They were